and Consulate General of India, Jeddah also have introduced the practice of organizing "Open Houses" on every second Thursday of the month to attend to the concerns of Indian expatriates in person.

(c) The Government proposes to start helpline services and organize open houses in Indian Missions in other countries in Gulf in due course.

Calling back of High Commission's officials

1675. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during April, 2003 the officials of the Indian High Commission in Mauritius were called back en-mass;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken, if any, to avoid recurrence of such development that warranted en-mass calling back of HCI officials, in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) No. Following the normal procedure for transfer of officials posted in Indian Missions/Posts abroad, three out of eight officers in the High Commission of India, Port Louis (Mauritius), were transferred. Two of them were transferred to other Missions abroad and one officer to Headquaters.

(c) Does not arise.

Foreign Policy with regard to East

1676. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would consider evolution of a foreign policy for the East which will benefit the Eastern and North-Eastern States of the country;

(b) whether free trade among the Eastern neighbouring countries with India would be considered;

(c) whether any discussions have been held with the neighbouring countries in the East; and